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Die Choral-Responsorien.*

(Fortsetzung.)

Ist der Candidat der priesterlichen Würde von feuriger Begeisterung für die hl. Liturgie in Folge des eingehenden Unterrichtes erfüllt, so wird er leicht zu überzeugen sein, dass es für ihn eine pflichtgemäße Sache sei, den kirchlichen Gesang kennen zu lernen, der so auf's innigste mit der katholischen Liturgie verbunden ist, wie keine andere Kunst. Er wird gerne und pünktlich seine Gesänge studieren, damit er nicht etwa in Folge seiner Nachlässigkeit Schuld trage, dass die hl. Liturgie auf Sänger und Volk keinen Eindruck mache.

Freilich muss der liturgische und der Unterricht im kirchlichen Gesange, im Choral, Hand in Hand gehen; ferner ist es nicht genug, dass das erst spät geschieht im höheren Seminare, schon früher muss Grund gelegt werden und auf diesem Grunde soll dann weitergebaut werden. **Wo aber die Begeisterung für die hl. Liturgie fehlt, da wird auch keine Liebe zum Choral vorhanden sein.** Der Priester wird denselben als Nebensache betrachten und auch als solche behandeln. Er wird seine Gesänge bei der feierlichen Liturgie singen, weil sie eben gesungen werden müssen; auf etwas anderes wird er nicht denken und sich also auch keine Mühe geben, dieselben *correct* und *secundum posse* schön zu singen.

Der Priester singe also seine Gesänge beim liturgischen Hochamt wenigstens fehlerlos. Er spreche Consonanten und Vocale genau, klar und deutlich aus, das ist die erste und wichtigste Regel. Ohne klare deutliche Aussprache der Vocale und Consonanten gibt es auch keine gute Aussprache der Silben und ohne diese keine solche bei den Worten.

Er beachte Länge und Kürze der Silben und hebe ganz besonders die Accentsilben hervor. Der Accent verleiht dem Worte Kraft, frische pulsierende Lebenswärme und gibt der Sprache eine organische Gliederung. Dabei hüte sich der Priester (dasselbe gilt auch für die übrigen, welche am Choralgesange, bei den Choral-Responsorien betheiligt sind), dass er den Accent mit der Quan-

tität verwechsle. Der Priester wird sich da leichter thun, weil er das von seinen Studien her wissen kann. **Und doch wie viel wird da gesündigt!** Viele meinen, die Accent-silbe lange aushalten und die nicht betonten mehr oder weniger verschlucken zu müssen auf Kosten der betonten. Das ist unrichtig. Accent ist nicht Quantität und Quantität nicht Accent. Der Accent steht eben so gut auf einer kurzen Silbe, wie er auf der langen steht. Das Wesen des Accentes besteht nicht darin, dass er die Silbe länger macht, als sie ist, dass er sie dehnt und aus einer kurzen Silbe von *einer "mora"* eine solche von *zwei "moraen"* macht. Es besteht—wie schon gesagt — darin, dass der accentuirten Silbe der Ton verliehen wird, welcher sie vor den anderen, unbetonnten auszeichnet. Es ist also ganz unrichtig, wenn der Priester in der Einleitung zur Präfation das "*per omnia*" so singt, dass das "*per*" fast verschwindet, gleichsam als wollte der Sänger dasselbe mit der grössten Hast verschlucken, um dann im langen Geniusse das "*o*" in "*omnia*" schwelgen zu können und das "*ni*" wieder so verschwinden zu machen, wie das "*per*" flüchtig und hastig entchwunden ist.

Es ist das nicht etwa nur erfunden, nur zu häufig wird so gesungen. Den betonten Silben wird zu viel Dehnung gegeben. Wenn sie auch lang sind, sollen sie doch nicht länger gesungen werden, als wie die kurzen, sonst werden die Töne nicht perlend, fliessend, sondern stossweise hervorgebracht. Allerdings darf man nie übersehen, die accentuirten Silben hervorzuheben, das soll aber nie so geschehen, dass der regelmässige Fluss der Töne unterbrochen werde. . . .

Will man auch auf die Quantität Rücksicht nehmen, so muss man allerdings den langen Silben eine grössere Dehnung geben, nie aber soll der langen Silbe mehr als die doppelte Zeit der kurzen im Gesang eingeräumt werden, weil sonst der oben gerügte Fehler fast nicht vermieden werden kann. Wir glauben, dass ohne besondere Rücksichtnahme auf die Quantität der Gesang correcter und schöner wird.

Dasselbe, was wir eben gesagt, gilt auch für die übrigen Gesänge der Priesters beim liturgischen Hochamte, von welchen wir nur noch zwei hervorheben wollen, weil sie sich oft wiederholen. Es sind dies das "*dominus vobiscum*" und das "*oremus*." Die drei Silben des Wortes "*dominus*" sind kurz. Es ist also ganz falsch, wenn Manche die Silbe "*do*" so lange halten, als wäre ihre Quantität allein so gross als die der beiden anderen zusammen genommen, oder gar noch grösser. **Der Accent macht sie nicht länger**, er zeigt nur an, dass sie tonisch hervorgehoben werden muss, ohne dass der Werth der Silben "*mi*" und "*nus*" eine Einbusse erleidet. . . .

Noch ärgere Fehler werden oft beim Worte "*vobiscum*" gemacht. Die Silbe "*bis*" ist von Natur aus lang, dazu kommt noch, dass in Folge der Zusammensetzung mit der *praepos.* "*cum*" das "*i*" durch *positio* lang wird. In dreisilbigen Worten aber, deren "*penultima*" lang ist, liegt der Ton auf dieser. . . .

Wir wollen da nicht weiter auf andere Fehler eingehen, welcher sich der Priester beim liturgischen Gesange schuldig machen kann z. B. durch zu hastiges oder zu schleppendes Singen; beide machen den Gesang unschön und zeigen im einen Falle von Unlust, im anderen Falle von gänzlichem Misskennen des Chorals.

(Fortsetzung folgt.)

The Catholic Church Organist.

By P. U. Kornmueller, O.S.B.

Translated by Albert Lohmann.

(Continued.)

A knowledge of the points thus far outlined is basic to what we shall next consider —the thorough training of the prospective organist in the theory and practice of his instrument. Technical proficiency, familiarity with the entire structure of harmony, and knowledge of the higher art-forms,—these are the indispensable requisites for an organist who would do justice to his instrument with a legato and artistic style of playing, such as is suited to the nature of the organ (especially when the organ is used in a solo capacity) and at the same time in keeping with the sublime, noble, sober, and strictly objective character of the organ tone. The noble and sublime is not attained by following the low and beaten pathway

of the musically banal and vulgar, but by rising to the eminences of musical art. And though artistic activity implies freedom of action, the true artist does not therefore set aside the laws of art, laws that will guide him safely and keep him from error. Nor does he disdain to fashion his work in the forms that have proved serviceable in artistic practice and have been sanctioned by the great masters; while working in these art-forms, the true artist vitalizes them with the breath of his own musical soul. Oh, that all organists knew and, by careful practice, mastered even the simplest forms and means of musical expression! In that case one would hear less of the aimless, lawless, purely fantastic, and hence inartistic playing of which so many of them are guilty at present.

Needless to say, one cannot become a good organist except by long and serious study; and this will necessarily include practical exercises in writing and at the instrument. Moreover, this preparation will have to extend to such subjects as correct tone-combination and chord-connection; modulation and good leading of voices; judicious interchange of one-part, several-part, or many-part playing for the purpose of agreeable and characteristic variation; formation of melody and development of motif (thematic work) including free and strict imitation, counterpoint, and canon and fugue; manner of employing tone-color effects peculiar to the separate stops; independent pedal-playing; characteristics of a good organ style, etc.

Being often obliged to extemporize, or improvise, i. e., to play without copy, the Catholic organist must, in a certain sense, also be a composer. But while other composers have time to fix and shape their musical ideas in notes and to develop and file them at their writing-desks, the organist has to contend with the disadvantage of having to play his musical ideas in finished form as soon as they are conceived: of course, the organist's task is by far the greater of the two; for it requires a readier command of artistic resources, besides calling for a very productive imagination and for the faculty of rapid mental survey. Still, if an organist has acquired such facility and quickness of conception, he enjoys the great advantage of being able to produce something better and more effective in point of expression; for his exalted mood and rhapsodic fervor will more than compensate for what his improvisations may lack in artistic finish.

That a thorough knowledge of harmony is indispensably necessary for an organist who would play correctly from figured-bass notation and that it will greatly facilitate and improve his readings from a complete organ-score—this I consider too evident to require explanation in this place.

I have just referred to the expressional advantages which the organist possesses and of which the church organist in particular ought to avail himself. This brings up another requisite for consideration. Ecclesiastical organ-playing ought not only to be an artistic performance as regards its combination of tones and chords and its interweaving of melodies and motifs, nor ought it merely to be a respectable or even a superior performance if measured by purely theoretical and technical laws and standards, but it ought, besides, to possess soul; it ought to be the embodiment, the clear and true expression of an idea, the exterior, audible form of something inward:—in a word, it ought to possess character and individuality. Here, then, is the additional thing required of a Catholic Church organist. He must know how to put soul, character, and expression into his playing. Only then can he make his playing serve the purpose of edification; and only then will he be able to reveal himself as a real master of his art.

But of what sort is this expression to be? Plainly, it must be the expression of a churchly mood and of nothing else. That the harmonies of a Catholic Church organist could, with propriety, breathe any other spirit than that which pervades and accompanies all the sacred functions of the liturgy, is unthinkable. This liturgical expression, this characteristic, churchly style of playing will naturally suggest itself to a master of organ technique after mature study of works of a model character. Like a vivifying breath, this churchly spirit will spontaneously infuse itself into his tonal textures and spiritualize them, provided he possesses this spirit himself, having nourished and cultivated it in his own heart. That which moves and actuates a person's heart, will invariably leave its impress, in some manner or other, upon one's exterior action. But where there is no spirit, no mood, no sentiment, the exterior act will be a cold and lifeless thing. It may elicit admiration for its artistic form; but, lacking inspiration, it will leave the heart of the listener untouched.

Even the purely human moods and emotions and the passions are very difficult to express analagously in music. Only masters

succeed in expressing them—masters who are mentally well developed and balanced; masters who possess a deep insight into the relation existing between music and soul-life, and who habitually live in a world of thought and sense from which the coarse and vulgar is excluded. Now the Catholic Church organist is expected to express something higher than purely human sentiments; therefore his mental and moral qualifications will have to be of a higher order. He must have been schooled to control himself musically; to keep a check upon his emotions and passions; to spurn the bizarre and sensual in music: and, in the development of his spiritual life, he must have advanced to the point where his soul is dominated by that restfulness, gravity, moderation, and balance which is the fruit of a truly religious formation. Thus qualified, he will unerringly find the right general devotional tone for his music; and then it should be an easy matter for him to find also the proper musical expression for the specifically ecclesiastical, or liturgical spirit.* at will.

We are prepared now to consider the second class of qualifications requisite for a Catholic Church organist; they may be comprised under the general heads of religious and ecclesiastical training, acquaintance with the Church's liturgy, and knowledge of the particular prescriptions regarding the use of the organ at divine service.†

One may be tempted to ask at the very outset whether there are any organists at all who can measure up to all these requirements. If it true, there are not many who can thus qualify; still the fact that there are even a few, shows these requirements to be attainable. The other organists—the great majority who are not of this select class—represent various grades of competency or incompetency. This proves that ecclesiastical organ-playing is a great art in which only those will be able to distinguish themselves who are naturally gifted in this line and who not only cultivate and diligently develop their talents but also persevere in their endeavor to improve and perfect themselves even after they have acquired proficiency. This is the road to success which all great organists have traveled; and, needless to say, not one of them has become a master at one stroke. Should this dis-

* Still, it is well to bear in mind that even the masters have to contend with limitations in this particular, for musical imagination and musical ideas are not to be commanded

† The author's later enumeration of these prescriptions has been omitted in this translation.—Transl.

hearten those who are endowed only with mediocre talents? Ought it not rather to encourage them? Ought not at least the zeal, the application, the serious endeavor of the masters to be an incentive and an example to them? Besides, however desirable it might be that all should attain to equal proficiency, this is not to be expected of us, not as long as we are just what we are—human beings. It is not essential to a worthy and creditable musical performance that it be grand, complex or superlatively artistic; simple music may be good music just as well. And a simple and dignified style of playing ought certainly to lie within reach of even country and village organists of modest artistic attainments, provided these organists be imbued with a churchly spirit and have a fair conception of what is beautiful, refined, and dignified in music.

As to improvisation, let me say that it is a great art; but, unfortunately, it is too often confounded with the playing of a senseless hodgepodg^e of chords, snatches of melody, cheap fingerboard tricks, glaring absurdities, and capricious trivialities. Let no organist who has not received a thorough theoretical and practical training; or who has not a well developed and refined musical taste; or—and this is most important—who lacks the faculty of musical imagination and invention—let no such organist ever presume to improvise anything of some length; as, for example, a prelude. Let him understand, and also let every organist of superior ability understand that there is no reason why one should feel ashamed to play a prelude from notes or to study a prelude and then play it from memory.

For the benefit of organ students and also for the benefit of organists whose training has been deficient, I insert here an instructive reflection found in B. Kothe's booklet, "Die Musik in der katholischen Kirche." (Breslau, 1861.) "It is very advisable," says Kothe, "to start organ pupils early on the practice of memorizing short and model organ pieces; for the musical memory, like all our other faculties, needs constant exercise in order to develop its vigor. And once an organist has stored up a considerable supply of such pieces in his memory, he will profit by them not only to the extent of being able to play and reproduce them as occasion may require, but he will also derive advantage from them in various other ways. They will help to refine his taste; they will enrich his mind with new ideas and widen the sweep of his imagination; and gradually

he will become inured to, and so unconsciously absorb, their style; and he will also learn in a practical way how motifs are employed and how compositions are constructed. These are all advantages that will serve him in good stead later on, when he undertakes improvisation of his own. And, last but not least, the memory of such model pieces will serve as a standard by which to measure and improve one's early attempts at improvisation; and thus they will inculcate what is very necessary at that stage of one's musical development—a spirit of humility."

(To be continued.)

Guide to Catholic Church Music

(Continued from Caecilia, 1919, No. 12,
p. 47.)

Missa in honorem Beatissimae Matris Dei-quatuor vocum virilium cum organo, auctore Henrico Tappert.

Mass in honor of the Mother of God, for four male voices with organ accompaniment by Henry Tappert.

(For sale: John Singenberger, St. Francis, Wis., and Fr. Pustet & Co., 436 Main St., Cincinnati, O. Price net 75c.)

Father Tappert's Mass in honor of the Mother of God, for four men's voices, deserves the best recommendation. One feature especially appeals to me: The author has adopted some restrictions regarding the range of men's voices.

C. BECKER.

This Mass deserves a position of honor among masses written for male voices. It is only of medium difficulty but of rare beauty and will undoubtedly achieve a powerful effect. The organ part offers not only good support to the voices but adds an additional grace and charm, being written quite independent of the voices. Altogether the opus eclipses anything thus far written by the Rev. composer. It must appeal to all who desire a liturgically correct and musically effective Mass for male chorus.—In favor of adoption.

REV. B. DIERINGER.

Highly recommended for the admission into our catalogue.

J. SINGENBERGER.

